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ITALY AND THE JUGOSLAV PEOPLES

BY
“CIVIS ITALICUS”

TRANSLATED BY
G. F. HILL.





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May 24 1916

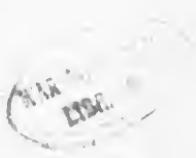
PREFATORY NOTE.

“Civis Italicus” is one of the leading authorities on Balkan affairs. Were he writing in his own name, he would need no introduction to such Englishmen as are at all familiar with the literature of the Balkan and Adriatic problems. Accordingly, this essay, though first published so long ago as July 1915, since when much has happened, should still command attention as a statement of the views and ideals of an unusually well-informed Italian observer. The author has modified it only in certain quite unimportant details.

The thanks of the Council are due to him, and to the editor of the NUOVA ANTOLOGIA, in which the article first appeared, for permission to issue this translation.

G.F.H.

March, 1916.

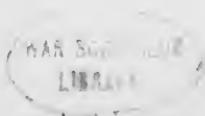




ITALY AND THE JUGOSLAV PEOPLES.

BY "CIVIS ITALICUS."

IN whatever way the map of Europe may be rearranged as the result of the present struggle, we may from now onwards regard it as certain that in the near future we shall see a great development of the Jugoslav peoples, who seem destined eventually to be re-united in a single state, which will play an important part in European politics. And, since Italy will in the nature of things come into intimate connexion with them, it will be well to seek to know them better, to consider how to come to an understanding with them, and how to inspire with more cordiality our mutual relations, political, economic and intellectual. It is too true that but little is known in Italy of Balkan questions, as of those concerning Austria-Hungary, and one of the secondary effects of this war on us is to reveal the ignorance of such matters which prevails, I do not say among the masses, but also in the more cultivated circles of Italian public opinion. The reason perhaps is that the Italians travel very little, and are sorely lacking in intellectual curiosity. This ignorance, as



we shall see, has led, at least among one section of our public, to quite erroneous judgments, to a contempt and antipathy for the Jugoslav peoples, which are in great measure quite unwarranted ; and this fact has been anything but advantageous to the Balkan policy of our Government, which ought to have been supported and directed by an intelligent and well-informed public opinion. There is now no longer any excuse for this ignorance ; the literature on the Balkan and Austrian questions is huge, and includes many works of real value. Among the more important foreign works it is enough to cite that of Wickham Steed, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, which will long remain the classic authority on that state, Seton-Watson's *The Southern Slav Question*, on the latest events in the Jugoslav world, Leopold von Chlumecky's *Oesterreich und Italien*, a book which, inspired by sentiments far from favourable to us, yet for that very reason merits all our attention. Nor is it necessary always to have recourse to foreign books ; there are several excellent ones in Italian, such as the two volumes by Virginio Gayda, *La crisi di un Impero* and *L'Italia d'oltre confine* ; Alessandro Dudan's *La Monarchia degli Absburgo*, an historical work of considerable importance and based on original research ; Angelo Pernice's *Origini ed evoluzione storica delle nazioni balcaniche*, and Gellio Cassi's *Il Mare Adriatico*, to mention only some of those more recently published.

It may, therefore, be useful to take a comprehensive survey of the historical development and the present state of the Jugoslav peoples, especially in so far as they are in contact with Italy and Italian interests.

The Jugoslavs* or Southern Slavs are divided into two chief groups—the Bulgars, a people not purely Slav in origin, but Slavized in language and civilization, and the Serbo-Croats, with whom may be grouped the Slovenes, racially and geographically their neighbours. With the first our relations, by reason of distance, cannot be very close, so that we shall confine our attention to the second group, with which our people has already been in direct contact for fourteen centuries ; and perhaps to-morrow the same will be true of our state. As to the Slovenes, indeed, not only are they situated at the gates of Italy, but some groups of them are actually settled within our borders. The total number of the Serbo-Croats and Slovenes amounts to about ten millions. Let us now see how they are distributed.

The Slovenes, in all 1,400,000, occupy the whole of Carniola, save some small tracts inhabited by Germans, part of Carinthia, of Styria, of Eastern Friuli (Gorizia-Gradisca), and some territories of the interior of Istria, and they constitute about ten per cent. of the population of Trieste. They are the poorest and most ignorant portion of the Jugoslav race ; devoid of literature, art or traditions, they would never have had much importance if Austria had not made use of them as an instrument to crush the Italian element on the littoral and especially in the city of Trieste.

The Serbo-Croats number about nine millions, and are spread over a vast zone, divided between Austria, Hungary, Serbia and Montenegro. Forming racially

* From *jug*, i.e., "South" in Serbo-Croatian.

and linguistically a single people*, they are divided by religion, and up to a certain point by political ideals, into two groups ; the Croats occupy the eastern part of Istria and the Quarnero islands, where they make about 200,000 out of a total population of 414,133. The mass of the Croat population on the other hand is to be found in Croatia-Slavonia, a region dependent on Hungary, but enjoying local autonomy ; of a total population of 2,621,954 they represent about seventy per cent., the remaining thirty per cent. being composed almost entirely of Serbs. In Dalmatia there is a population of about 660,356, of whom half a million are Croats. The Serbs, outside Croatia-Slavonia (700,000), are to be found in Dalmatia, especially in the south, where they number about 100,000, and in southern Hungary, where they are reckoned at a little under half a million. Another 200,000 Serbs are scattered through the rest of Hungary.

The mass of the Serb population are no longer to be found within the frontiers of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but in the Kingdom of Serbia. This Kingdom, as a consequence of the last Balkan wars, has a population of about 4,500,000, of whom, however, only 3,000,000 or 3,500,000 are Serbs, the others being Macedonian Bulgars, Albanians, etc. Then in Montenegro, the other free Serb state, there is a population (with new territories) of about 435,000, almost all of Serb race. Finally there is Bosnia-Herzegovina, a country under the Austro-Hungarian government, Serbian by race, but with a population divided by

* The Croatian language, but for a few dialectal differences, is identical with Serbian, but uses the Latin characters, whereas Serbian uses the Cyrillian.

religion into Orthodox (825,418), entirely devoted to the Serbian cause, Mussulmans (612,137), and Catholics who call themselves Croats (434,061). The ten million of Jugoslavs are accordingly distributed roughly as follows :—

(a) *In Austria-Hungary.*

1. Istria	..	..	Croats	200,000
2. Dalmatia	..	..	Croats	500,000
			Serbs	100,000
3. Croatia-Slavonia	..	..	Croats	1,900,000
			Serbs	700,000
4. Hungary	..	..	Croats	300,000
			Serbs	600,000
5. Bosnia-Herzegovina	..	..	Croats	435,000
			Serbs	625,000
			Mussulmans	600,000
6. Carniola, Carinthia, Styria and the Lit- toral	..	..	Slovenes	1,400,000

(b) *In the free Serbian Kingdoms.*

1. Serbia	..	..	Serbs	3,500,000
2. Montenegro	..	..	Serbs	435,000

As Virginio Gayda writes (*L'Italia d'oltre Confine*, p. 311), we cannot speak of the Adriatic problem without reference to the Jugoslav movement. " Its importance arises from these fundamental facts : it embodies an historical tendency of a people, precipitated by an inevitable fate towards a solution ; no force can arrest it or definitively divert it : whatever may be the solution, it will work a change in the internal aspect of Austria, and will profoundly affect the political



national system of the Eastern coast of the Adriatic, with an immediate recoil on the Italians of Austria and on all the Italian element in the Adriatic region."*

In the days of the Venetian Republic, that power dominated all the Eastern coast of the Adriatic, from below Trieste to the Ionian Sea, except for some points on the Croatian coast and the territory of the Republic of Ragusa ; but her possessions did not extend far inland, and where she had so penetrated for a certain distance she had not established her culture there as she had done along the coast. The city of Trieste had also been for some time under the Venetian hegemony, but in 1382 placed itself voluntarily under the protection of the Archdukes of Austria, who finally by an abuse of their power converted this protectorate into possession. The territory of Gorizia-Gradisca was divided between Venice and the Austrian Counts of Gorizia ; so also a part of the interior of Istria was a fief of Imperial Counts, and in the part which was governed by Venice there were numerous Croat peasants transported by the Republic to colonize the region.

The interior of Dalmatia was populated by Slavs from the fall of the Byzantine Empire, and the part of the coast which constituted the tiny Republic of Ragusa (from the mouth of the Narente to the Bocche di Cattaro) was also in the main Slav. But the other coast cities, Greek foundations, colonised by Latins and then ruled by Venice, were absolutely Italian ; Italian also was all the civilization of the region.

* This book was written, it must be remembered, before Italy went to war.

The Italian language had to be used by the Slavs themselves in all their relations with the Western world, and down to a few years ago every person of the slightest education spoke Italian habitually. Even to-day many of the most fanatical Croats speak it at home, and often their women know no other language.

Croatia-Slavonia, on the other hand, has always been a purely Slav country, if we except the city of Fiume, in which the majority of the population are Italian. It enjoyed a period of independence under a native dynasty, after the extinction of which it came under Hungarian dominion. After the fall of the Kingdom of Hungary in consequence of the Turkish victory at Mohacs in 1526, the Croatian Diet elected Ferdinand of Austria king of Croatia; when the Kingdom of Hungary was reconstituted in the seventeenth century under the House of Hapsburg, Croatia was again placed under Hungary, but with a large measure of autonomy.

The other regions occupied by Jugoslavs had in the middle ages constituted the Serbian Empire, which under King Stephen Dushan (1336-56) included not only the present kingdom of Serbia, but also all Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, and parts of Greece and Bulgaria. Stephen died as he was on the point of occupying Constantinople, and subsequently many territories fell away from his kingdom; among these were Bosnia and Herzegovina, which formed independent states. In 1389 the Serbian army was utterly defeated by the Turks at the battle of Kossovo, and in the course of the fifteenth century the Ottomans



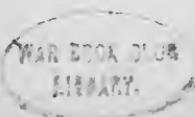
conquered nearly all the Serbian country. In Macedonia and in Albania the Serb element, mingling with other races, was greatly reduced and almost disappeared, while in the valleys of the Morava and Drina and in Bosnia-Herzegovina it maintained its racial unity, although in these last provinces there were numerous conversions to Islam, above all among the adherents of the sect of the Bogomils, to which the majority of the aristocracy belonged. These Mussulman Serbs then became the fiercest persecutors of those who had remained true to their old faith. In the so-called Old Serbia, a region to the South-East of Montenegro, the Albanians who had also been converted to Islam, encouraged and egged on by the Turkish authorities, massacred and plundered the Orthodox Serbs. A certain number of Serbs, to escape persecution, had emigrated to Southern Hungary, where they received lands and were granted a certain local autonomy under their own "despots." In 1690, at the invitation of the Emperor Leopold I., Arsen Tzernojevich, the Serbian Patriarch of Ipek, emigrated from that district with 37,000 Christian families to settle in Hungary, and then was established the Serbian Voivody, from which the King-Emperor takes one of his titles, Grand Voivode of the Serbian Voivody. The only scraps of Serbian territory that remained independent were the tiny principality of Montenegro and the Republic of Ragusa. Montenegro, formerly part of the Serbian Empire, became independent after Kossovo, and was subsequently the asylum of those Serbs who were able to escape from the Turkish persecutions. It resisted with magnificent courage

the repeated attacks of the Ottomans, and, although several times invaded, always succeeded in expelling the enemy. The story of Ragusa is less heroic, and the little Republic succeeded in saving herself from the insidious designs of her Mussulman and Christian neighbours more by diplomacy than by force of arms. Although inhabited by a population mainly Serbian, its culture was in great part Latin, as is proved by the Venetian style of its monumental remains, and by the documents of its archives, which are drawn up in Latin and Italian as well as Serbian.

By the Peace of Campoformio in 1797, Napoleon ceded all the dominions of the Venetian Republic to the Hapsburg Monarchy; but he took them back after Austerlitz, in 1805, and constituted, out of the Croatian coast, Carniola, Carinthia and the district of Gorizia, the Kingdom of Illyria, to which in 1808 was added the territory of Ragusa. Then followed the invasion of Dalmatia by the Austrians and English, and by the Treaty of Vienna all the Adriatic littoral was assigned to Austria-Hungary.

Croatia and Slavonia were declared *partes adnexae* of Hungary, retaining their elective Diet, local autonomy and the use of the Croatian language; but the city of Fiume remained a *corpus separatum* with an autonomous municipality dependent on the Hungarian Government. All the rest of the region became part of Austria.

In the period 1815-1848 the Jugoslav provinces of Austria-Hungary were governed despotically; this was true even of Croatia-Slavonia, in spite of its constitution. These peoples lacked a true national



sentiment to unite them, and while on the coast Italian continued to be the language of officials and of the cultured classes, in the interior, although Croatian was mostly spoken, German gained ground. However, in this period were seen the first beginnings of a Slav renascence, in the Monarchy as well as in the lands which were under the Ottoman yoke. Thenceforward the movement assumed a double aspect, Croatian-Catholic in Austria-Hungary, Serbian-Orthodox in Turkey. The Serbian movement naturally had for its chief aim the liberation of the country from Ottoman oppression, but the first insurrectionary movements in 1804 were directed against the persecutions of the Janissaries ; indeed, from the beginning the Serbian patriots acted in the name of the Sultan against his too turbulent soldiery. But very soon the Constantinople Government became aware of the object of the Serbian Christians and opposed their claims by force of arms. After a series of bloody insurrections, with the intervention now of Russia, now of Austria, sometimes to aid the Christians against the dominion of Islam, but more often inspired by the mutual jealousies and ambitions of these powers, Serbia obtained in 1820 a partial autonomy ; and in 1867, after other revolts from within and interventions from outside, the last Turkish garrison was withdrawn from the country, which was now governed by native princes of the two dynasties of Karageorgevich and Obrenovich in alternation. Serbia had then an area of only 39,000 square kilometres, but was able to make a certain progress ; there was a renascence of national culture, and a revival of literary traditions and of the

memories of the great Serbian Empire of the Middle Ages. Then were born the first dreams of the reunion of the scattered members of the Serbian nation in a single State, and Belgrade became not merely the capital of the Serbian principality, but the centre of attraction for the Serbs of Turkey and Austria-Hungary. In that Monarchy, however, the Pan-Serbian idea found itself opposed by the Croatian idea, and relations between Serbs and Croats in Croatia-Slavonia and in Dalmatia were anything but cordial.

In Austria-Hungary the Jugoslav revival assumed a character different from that of the movement in Serbia and in Turkey. The memory was still vivid of the Napoleonic kingdom of Illyria, which had united almost all the Jugoslavs to the Monarchy, and on the attempt of the Hungarians to Magyarize Croatia-Slavonia, there arose at Agram a Croatian Nationalist movement, at first literary and intellectual, but subsequently also political. It was inspired by Liudevit Gaj, whose works enjoyed a wide circulation and popularity. This "Illyrian" movement marked the beginning of "Trialism," or the aspiration towards a single Croatian state which should comprehend all the Jugoslav provinces of Austria and of Hungary under the ægis of the Hapsburgs. The Hungarian Government sternly opposed this tendency, and was always successful in hindering the election of the "Illyrists" to the Diet of Agram. From 1840 onwards it attempted to introduce Magyar as the official language in the place of Croatian and Latin, and in 1842 there were sanguinary riots between Croatians and Hungarians. In 1848, after a brief idyll of demo-



cratic fraternity between the two peoples, the Croatians elected, as their Ban or Governor, General Joseph Jellachich, and demanded complete independence from Hungary. The Magyars, however, while struggling for their own independence from Austria, fiercely oppressed the non-Magyar populations of the kingdom—Croats, Serbs, Roumanians—and this threw them into the arms of Austria and reaction. In 1849, in fact, the Croats under Jellachich attacked Hungary from the south and then fought beside the troops of Prince Windisch-Grätz to crush the Liberals of Vienna. After the triumph of Austria, Croatia-Slavonia was separated from Hungary and received the addition of Fiume, though not, as it had hoped, of Dalmatia. From 1850 to 1860, however, local autonomies remained in suspense, and Hungary and Croatia alike were ruled from Vienna by the reactionary methods of the Minister Bach, to such a degree that it was said that Croatia received as a concession that which had been imposed on Hungary as a punishment. In 1861 a sort of constitution was granted, but the constitutional *régime* was not seriously re-established in all parts of the monarchy until 1867. However, Croatia-Slavonia was again placed under Hungary, though with considerable autonomy, and it lost Fiume, which once more became a *corpus separatum*. The country was represented at the Parliament of Budapest for common affairs by thirty-six (afterwards forty-three) deputies elected by the Diet of Agram from among its members, and Hungary continued to be represented in Croatia by the Ban, who was nominated by the King.

Meanwhile Austria had lost a great part of her Italian dominions—Lombardy in 1859, the Veneto in 1866—and, what is more, her influence over the minor states of Italy; there remained to her only Trent, Gorizia-Gradisca, Trieste, Istria and Dalmatia, lands wholly or in part Italian. Before 1859 and 1866 Italian had been the official language of a great part of the Monarchy; indeed, there is a record of an ordinance of 1854 concerning the mercantile marine which was published in Italian only. Now, on the other hand, Austria ceased to be an Italian power, save for a small strip of her territory; at the same time she had lost in a great degree her German character, and the Slav element had succeeded to the most influential place in the Monarchy. The Italians who remained within her borders came to be considered as a dangerous element, in as much as they could not but feel attracted towards their brothers in the kingdom of Italy. Nor need we forget that, repelled by Italy and Germany, the ambitions of the Monarchy were thenceforward ever more and more directed towards the Balkan countries; and for such aims the Jugoslavs represented a valuable element. It was necessary, therefore, on the one hand to give them some reasons for satisfaction and, on the other, to secure a strong base on the Adriatic littoral. To this end Austria initiated a policy of denationalisation of the Italian element in the whole region, according every kind of favour to the Jugoslavs, and seeking to erase the character which two thousand years of Latin civilization had impressed upon it. The constitution of 1867, by giving greater importance to numbers, placed the



Italians in a situation of inferiority in Dalmatia, where, if they formed the cultured and well-to-do section of the population, they were nevertheless numerically in a minority. Thus it was that the local administrations were by slow degrees all transformed from Italian to Slav, except the commune of Zara, where the Italian character still maintains itself intact, although assailed by snares and oppression in a thousand forms. In the other provinces where the Italians are in a majority, or at least in a strong minority, they are successful in maintaining their racial character, but unfortunately the insidious methods of the Austrian Government have succeeded in arousing between Italians and Slavs a deep hatred which did not exist before, and which should never have arisen; and it is this hatred which has often made both of them forget who is their real enemy.

It is, however, in this period that the Jugoslav peoples subject to Austria-Hungary begin to make real progress. The Jugoslav Academy of Agram founded in 1867 very quickly became an important centre of culture, and in 1874 the Croatian University was founded in the same city. The work of the moral and intellectual elevation of the people initiated by Gaj was continued by Joseph Strossmayer, bishop of Diakovo, the eminent theologian, archæologist and writer of Latin verse, famous in the Western world for his fierce opposition at the Vatican Council of 1869-70 to the doctrine of Papal infallibility. He devoted all his activity, all his ability and the large revenues of his diocese to the Croatian idea. Throughout Croatia, as also in the Jugoslav provinces of

Austria, there arose schools of all grades ; and if we must deplore the Slavizing of certain formerly Italian institutions, we cannot but admire the efforts of a rude and primitive people to improve its own culture. The Slovenes lingered far behind the Croats and the Serbs in this movement, being ever the most ignorant section of the Jugoslavs in Austria. If the Viennese Government stirred up the Slavs as a whole against the Italians, it did not neglect to apply its customary principle of *divide et impera* to the Slavs themselves, and spared no effort to intensify the dissension between Croats and Serbs. The former, being Catholics, and indeed Clericals, enjoyed the favour of the authorities and of the reactionary Court camarilla ; while the Serbs, who, besides being Orthodox, were in close relation with their co-nationals beyond the borders, were suspect and persecuted. The Government of Budapest, on the other hand, suspected both parties equally, and tyrannized over both, while careful to hinder all agreement between them.

The year 1876 is a fateful date in the history of the Jugoslavs. The persecutions of which the Christian populations of Turkey were the victims provoked in 1875-76 a series of revolts which were bloodily repressed. The first movement broke out in the Herzegovina, extending thence to Bosnia, and was caused by the cruelty and extortions of the Mussulman Serbs themselves, supported by the Ottoman authorities. The revolutionaries received help from Serbia, from Montenegro and from the Krivoshie mountaineers above the Bocche di Cattaro. In 1876 Serbia and Montenegro declared war against Turkey, and while the latter was



almost uniformly successful, Serbia was defeated and forced to beg for an armistice. At the same time an insurrectionary movement in Bulgaria was crushed with horrible massacres by the Turks and the Pomaks (Mussulman Bulgars). These occurrences provoked the intervention of Russia, and after a long and arduous campaign Turkey was defeated and forced to sign the Treaty of S. Stefano. On this foundation was constituted a great Bulgarian State, and small additions were made to the territory of Serbia and Montenegro. At Berlin this treaty was revised and corrected in accordance with the wishes of England; Serbia received the districts of Nish, Vrania and the partly Bulgarian district of Pirot, while to Montenegro were assigned Podgoritza and a strip of sea-coast with the ports of Antivari and Dulcigno. But Austria was more fortunate, since without having had to fight she received at the hands of the signatories to the Treaty of Berlin the mandate to "occupy" and administer Bosnia and Herzegovina, two fair and rich provinces, inhabited, as we have seen, by a population entirely Serbo-Croatian, though divided by religion into three different and hostile communities. Although they were not then formally annexed, they fell completely under the dominion of Austria-Hungary, and were thus shut out of the sphere of Serbian aspirations. Further, the Monarchy obtained the right to establish garrisons and make roads in the Sanjak of Novibazar, which thus created a barrier between Serbia and Montenegro and a convenient means of access for Austria to Macedonia, Albania and eventually the *Ægean*.

The Treaty of Berlin was consequently a heavy blow to the Serbian States ; for if it granted them some additions of territory, it left numerous Serbian populations in Old Serbia and Macedonia under the Ottoman yoke, and substituted in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the Turkish dominion—cruel and oppressive, it is true, but feeble and destined to disappear—that of Austria-Hungary, organized and regular, but odious to the people and above all strong and stable. The occupation strengthened in Austria the tendency to “Trialism,” which, if it had been translated into action, would have marked the decline of Serbian aspirations. Trialism had subsequently a powerful protector in the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who saw in it a weapon against the overbearing attitude of the Hungarians, an instrument for strengthening Clerical influences, and a bulwark against Italian Liberalism on the one side and Serbian Orthodoxy on the other. Hungarians, Serbs and Italians, therefore, stood in opposition to it, but each on their own account, without any attempt at real understanding. Meanwhile there was a continuous development in the Monarchy of the double policy in regard to the Jugoslavs—support and encouragement in the struggle against the Italians in the Austrian provinces, oppression and persecution of the Jugoslavs themselves on the part of the Hungarian Government in Croatia-Slavonia and of the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia-Herzegovina. By means of a series of illegal provisions, acts of violence and abuse of authority, Hungary attempted to Magyarize Croatia-Slavonia ; and although the country was almost entirely Slav, the elections were

conducted in such a way that in the Diet of Agram there was for a long time a Magyarophil or “ Magyar-one ” majority. This provoked in the population a violent discontent, which showed itself in 1903 in serious tumults directed against Hungary and its local representative, the Ban Count Khuen-Hedervary, whose method of government was to excite races and parties against each other. Meanwhile, however, the tendency to an understanding between Croats and Serbs had been gathering force, thanks especially to the labours of the Dalmatian publicist Franz Supilo ; and since it had not been possible to gain the support of Austria against the over-bearing behaviour of the Hungarian Government, it was decided, at the gathering of Croatian deputies at Fiume in 1905, to work for an understanding with the party of Independence in the Parliament of Budapest, provided that a guarantee could be obtained for the union of Croatia-Slavonia with Dalmatia and for the complete autonomy of these provinces. Soon afterwards twenty-six Serbian deputies, meeting at Zara, expressed their adhesion to the Fiume resolution. The agreement with the Hungarian Independence party led to nothing, but, on the other hand, the Serbo-Croatian coalition was established in Croatia-Slavonia. Now that it no longer commanded a majority in the Croatian Diet, the Hungarian Government inaugurated under the new Ban, Baron Paul Rauch, a *régime* of sheer absolutism, without the slightest regard for legality. In this business the Governments of Vienna and Pest were in agreement, since both were aware of the grave common danger threatened by the Serbo-Croatian understand-

ing. Then was let loose a veritable storm of accusations against the leaders of the coalition, with the object of discrediting them and proving that they were acting in collusion with individuals and societies which aimed at detaching the Jugoslav provinces from the Monarchy and uniting them to the Kingdom of Serbia. In the summer of 1908, in consequence of the publication of the pamphlet *Finale* by the police-agent Nastich, many Serbs were arrested on the charge of high treason against the State.

Meanwhile Austria considered that the moment had come to regularize her position in Bosnia-Herzegovina, perhaps because the constitution proclaimed in Turkey raised the question of the parliamentary representation (at Constantinople) of the "occupied" provinces ; and on 7th October, 1908, their annexation was proclaimed. The series of arrests in Serbia is in a way connected with this act ; because Austria, unable to disregard the decisions of the Treaty of Berlin without an excuse provided by the other side, was obliged to justify her violation of international law by proving that the Serbs were plotting against her own integrity. The annexation caused an enormous scandal through all Europe (except in Germany), and all but provoked a war between Austria and Serbia. If Serbia finally accepted the *fait accompli*, it was because Russia, feeling herself insufficiently supported by France and Great Britain, while Germany had promised all her aid to Austria, counselled submission for the moment. The result seemed a triumph for the Austro-Hungarian Imperialist policy, but in reality it had been achieved at the cost of a grave sacrifice, namely, of the right to



maintain garrisons in the Sanjak of Novibazar. This is not the place to examine the motives of that sacrifice ; it is enough to lay stress on the fact that thereby Austria closed to herself the most convenient road to the heart of the Balkans, and rendered possible in the future the collaboration for warlike purposes of Serbia and Montenegro. The annexation had not put a stop to the persecution of the Serbs ; indeed, the arrests increased in numbers, and the monstrous trial of Agram was set on foot, fifty-three Serbs being charged with Pan-Serbian conspiracy. The case, based on forgery, illegality and abuses of every kind, ended with the sentencing of thirty-one of the accused to penalties ranging from five to twelve years' imprisonment each. But in the libel action which followed at Vienna against Prof. Friedjung on behalf of some of the condemned persons and of other Serbs, the iniquity of the Agram sentences, and the nefarious workings of the Hungarian Government in Croatia and of the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, were made as clear as day, and while Friedjung came to terms with his accusers all the persons condemned at Agram were pardoned.

These events only made the understanding between Serbs and Croats the more cordial, and intensified the hatred of both against Austria-Hungary. But the kingdom of Serbia was still too feeble, disorganized and torn by internal struggles to exercise a strong attraction for all the Jugoslavs of the Monarchy and excite a dangerous irredentist movement ; and in men's ears still lingered the echo of the horrible assassination of Belgrade, which had thrown so lurid

a light on Balkan political customs. The Pan-Serbian idea was still a vague aspiration and nothing more, as was proved at the trials of Agram and Vienna. But the Balkan war of 1912 introduced a radical modification of the position, by raising enormously the prestige of Serbia. Thousands of Serbian and Croatian subjects of Austria hastened to enrol themselves in the ranks of the Serbian and Montenegrin armies, and at the time of the next mobilization in Austria-Hungary the resistance to the recall of the reservists assumed vast proportions, amounting to as many as eighty per cent. of those called up in some parts of Dalmatia. If the second Balkan war marked the end of the League, it did not, in the eyes of the Austro-Hungarian Jugoslavs, diminish the prestige of Serbia ; and the kingdom began to represent in reality a possible peril to the Dual Monarchy, since henceforward the union of all the Serbo-Croatian peoples became visible on the horizon as an ideal capable of practical realization. Austria understood the bearing of these events, and devoted all her energy to check the expansion of Serbia and Montenegro even on the Balkan side. The other great Powers, for fear of more serious complications, gave their assent to her policy. Serbia, though her territory was doubled, was still impelled by one aspiration which had remained unsatisfied—an outlet to the sea—and hoped as a consequence of her successes to attain the *optatus alveus*. In the first war a Serbian army, after a march which will remain memorable in military annals, reached the coast near Durazzo ; and this might have been her port. But Austria opposed it

strenuously, adducing as pretext the violation of the principle of nationality, in so far as some of the territories occupied by the Serbs were inhabited by Albanians. This unwonted tenderness on the part of Austria for oppressed nationalities might excite wonder; but her true motive was very different. As a general principle she wished to avoid an excessive aggrandizement of Serbia, but above all she saw in an independent Albania an excellent theatre—the last remaining to her in the Balkans—for the development of her activity and her intrigues, with the hope of reacquiring part of her shaken prestige. The idea, from the Austro-Hungarian point of view, is perfectly intelligible. Less so the attitude of Italy in giving Austria her unconditional support. Italy, it is true, had no territorial aims in the Balkans, and no intention of carrying on there the sort of intrigues so dear to the Viennese Government. But apart from the sympathy which bound us to the Albanians by ancient tradition, and by the fact that numerous people of that race live in our country, there was a fear, I may say almost a panic fear, lest the extension of Serbia to the Adriatic would be equivalent to the appearance of Russia in that sea. Serbia, it was said, being a Slav Orthodox State, would only be the vanguard of Russia. This conviction was and is widely diffused in public opinion, and has inspired the policy of several of our statesmen. To this must be added the antipathy which the Italians of the Austrian littoral cherish for their Slav neighbours, and which they had instilled into those Italians of Italy who had occupied themselves with the Adriatic question. Finally, we must take into account our

general foreign policy, which, thanks to the Triple Alliance, has been tied to that of Austria. In this way tendencies so diverse, nay so opposed, as Irredentism, sympathy for the Triple Alliance, pity for oppressed nationalities, fear of Russia, and, further, on the part of the Clericals hatred of Orthodoxy, and, on that of the snobs, inclination towards an aristocratic state like Austria—all contributed to mould our policy in opposition to Serbian aspirations. Thence sprang that abortion, the State of Albania. It should be understood that our inadequate knowledge of Balkan history is responsible for the most important of these tendencies: the fear that Serbia would become a fief of Russia. History proves, on the contrary, that if the development of the Balkan States began with the struggle against the Turks and with the support of some great Powers, especially of Russia, it took form, in the second stage, as a struggle to liberate itself from the hobbles imposed by the liberator State. The history of Bulgaria offers us a luminous example of this principle. After the war of 1877, when it was a question of creating the state of Bulgaria, Russia and England were equally convinced that it would be a slave to the former; for that reason Russia wished it to be a large state, while England did her best to reduce it to the smallest terms. In the end there was created a Bulgaria smaller than Russia desired; but to the great surprise of all, the Bulgars were no sooner freed from the Turkish yoke than they devoted all their strength to shaking off Russian influence. Weak and few in numbers though they were, they succeeded, and in the crisis of 1885 for the

union of Bulgaria with Eastern Roumelia, it was England that supported them and Russia that hindered their aspirations. These facts had been forgotten by those in Italy who were inimical to the Serbian ideal ; nor was any account taken of the fact that, the stronger the Balkan States become, the more independent will they be of foreign influences. We forget also the profound differences that exist between Russia and the Balkan countries in government, political traditions, habits and social customs.

The consequences of the exclusion of Serbia from the Adriatic were serious, since it rendered the Serbians hostile to any concession whatever in favour of Bulgaria in Macedonia, and thus led the way to the second Balkan war, shattering the alliance and leaving a residuum of jealousy and rancour between Serbs and Bulgars, and between Bulgars and Greeks, which has ever since prevented its reconstitution. It is questionable whether Austria would have presented her brutal *ultimatum* to Serbia in July, 1914, had the League still been in existence.

Henceforward all the Serbs of Austria-Hungary, and also a great number of the Croats, turned their eyes to Serbia and Montenegro, as in the struggle for our own Risorgimento the eyes of all the rest of Italy were fixed on Piedmont. When on 28th July, 1914, the Austro-Serbian war broke out, involving afterwards seven other powers, Austria, who had always favoured the Jugoslavs when it was a question of inciting them against Italy, now regarded them as rebels, and adopted towards them a policy of cruel repression. Almost all the most eminent persons,

whether Serb or Croat, including many Deputies to the Reichsrath and the provincial Diets, were arrested or interned, except those who were fortunate enough to escape in time ; not a few, it is said, were executed. In Bosnia-Herzegovina above all the repression was savage, as also were the measures against the Serbian population during the two Austrian invasions of the territory of the kingdom. The precise details of these events are not yet known, but it is certain that Austria declared war not only on Serbia and Montenegro, but on all the Jugoslav element even within her own frontiers, so much so that many regiments of that race mutinied rather than fight against their own brethren, or surrendered voluntarily to the Serbian troops after the disastrous days of Tzer and Valievo.

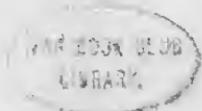
It remains now to examine the question of our future relations with Serbia, or rather with the great Jugoslav State which will probably issue from this war. Many in Italy believe that the question of the littoral constitutes an irremediable cause of strife between us and the Slavs, since they would claim the whole of the Eastern coast as their inheritance. There are certainly some Chauvinists who demand as much, but they form a small minority, and it should not be difficult to come to an agreement with the others. Although it may be impossible to divide the territory in dispute between Italy and Jugoslavia in such a way that all the Italians may be assigned to the one and all the Slavs to the other part, it will be possible to arrive at a partition which will be approximately rational and equitable. To Italy appertain by right those territories which by tradition and culture are

conspicuously Italian, even if they contain a slight Slav majority, since mere numbers ought not to form the only criterion. So also we ought to have those tracts of coast and those islands which are indispensable for our security. The rest will belong to the Slavs, and on this foundation it will be possible to come to an amicable agreement, so that our future relations with the Serbo-Croatians may be intimate and cordial. As the hatred of Austria has already united the two branches, formerly hostile, of the Jugoslav people, so it seems that from the outbreak of the war has been born an accord between the Italians of Dalmatia and the Croatian Liberals, and even between Italians and Slovenes in the Gorizia district and at Trieste, where both have been victims of the same persecution. It is to be hoped accordingly that the old rancour will soon be forgotten and that the two peoples will work together, in war and then in peace, for a better future.

Italy indeed is destined to exercise a widespread beneficent influence in the development of Jugoslavia and of the Balkans in general. These countries are of a considerable potential wealth, but little exploited ; they lack railways, roads, great public works, and, above all, industries, except to a small extent in Roumania and Greece ; nor will they for many years to come be in a position to provide for their own needs. Up till now they have imported the greater part of their industrial products from Austria-Hungary, from Germany and from Great Britain, while Italy has occupied a relatively modest position in this field. In the future, however, thanks to the hatred excited by this war against Germany and Austria, the Balkan

States will certainly do their best to find elsewhere the products of which they have need. Russia for many years to come will not be in a position to export manufactures in large quantities, so that the field will remain open above all to Great Britain, France and Italy. The latter, in view of her excellent geographical position with the ports of Brindisi, Bari, Ancona, Venice, and, let us hope, also some of those on the other shore, ought to be in a position to enjoy a large share of these advantages. On the other hand we shall be able to derive from Jugoslavia many raw materials of which we have need, and contribute to the construction of public works in that region through our engineers and skilled workmen and in part through our capital. But our collaboration will not be limited to merchandise, capital and labour; our culture also and our teaching institutions will contribute to the Balkan revival, just as in the middle ages, when together with cargoes of manufactured goods Italian ideas penetrated into Serbia, and Italy served as a channel of spiritual communication between the Balkans and the rest of Western Europe.

But to attain this end it will be necessary for the Italian people to be bold in commerce as in arms and in politics, to shake off many prejudices, and to acquire much knowledge.





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